

rather feeble and smooth. Lateral line slightly bent ventrally. Six longitudinal series of scales between the lateral line and ventral fin.

Colour : silvery-white.

Distribution : Tigris river, Iraq and Aleppo, Syria.

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FIRST RECORD OF *LYCODYNTIS ELEGANS* (PISCES; MURAENIDAE) FROM THE RED SEA.

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Abstract.— A moray eel, *Lycodontis elegans* Bliss, 1883) has been collected for the first time from the Gulf of Aqaba, North-East of the Red Sea. The morphometric measurements and colour pattern is described.

Résumé.— Une murène, *Lycodontis elegans* (Bliss, 1883), a été récoltée pour la première fois dans le golfe d'Aqaba, au nord-est de la Mer Rouge. L'auteur en décrit la morphologie et la coloration.

Keywords : Red Sea, Aqaba Gulf, Muraenidae, *Lycodontis elegans*, new records, Moray eel.

Two specimens of *Lycodontis elegans* (Bliss, 1883), 440 and 510 mm in total length, were caught in August 1985 by hooks and line at a depth of 180 m from the Jordanian portion of the Gulf of Aqaba. The specimens are preserved in the Museum of the Marine Science Station, Aqaba (catalogue No. MSS-A150, A151. Coll. A. Ajiad & El-Absy).

Lycodontis elegans has not hitherto been reported from the Red Sea. The description of the presently collected specimens agrees very well with that given by Smith (1962) of his specimens collected from Inhaca Island of the Western Indian Ocean who depended on the original description given by Bliss (1883).

Lycodontis McClelland, 1844

Type species *Lycodontis literata* McClelland, 1844, *Calcutta. J. nat. Hist.*, 186, pl. 7, fig. 2, by subsequent designation of Jordan, 1919.

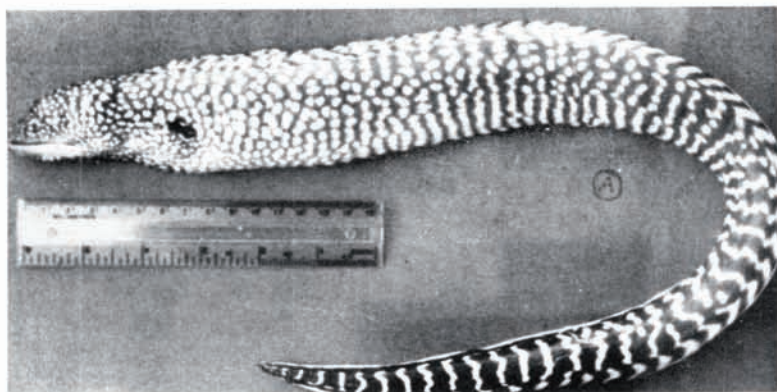


Fig. 1. *Lycodontis elegans* (Bliss, 1883). 440 mm total length, from the Gulf Aqaba (MSS. A150. 18 August 1985).

Lycodontis elegans (Bliss, 1883) (Fig. 1)

Gymnothorax elegans Bliss, 1883. *Trans. Roy. Soc. Mauritius*, 60. Type locality : Mauritius.

Lycodontis goldsbroughi Smith, 1949. Sea fish. S. Africa, 510, pl. 100, fig. 1124a (Inhaca).

Lycodontis elegans Smith, 1962. *Ichth. Bull. Rhodes Univ.* 23 : 436, pl. 56, fig. B (Inhaca).

Description of the Red Sea specimens : body slender and elongate. Body depth in total length 16.9 and 17; in head 1.9 and 2. Head in length 8.5 and 8.9; in trunk 2.7 and 3. Tail in length 1.83 and 1.85; in snout to anus 1.24 and 1.27. Eyes in snout 2.2 and 2. Snout in head 5.4 and 5.5. Mouth in head 2.30 and 2.33. Jaws equal in length. Teeth triangular in one row on both jaws, with one long depressible fang tooth on intermaxillary, vomerine teeth small. Front nostrils in tube near tip of snout, hind nostrils rounded near the top of the head, in front of eyes. Eyes small, nearly equal in size to the gill opening, located midway between tip of snout and posterior corner of mouth. Dorsal begins before gill opening, anal just behind anus. Anus just behind anterior half of total length. Gill opening located just below median level of side. Depth of the body at anus nearly equal to half of body depth at anterior part of trunk.

Colour (in fresh specimens) : body greenish-brown to yellow, with numerous close set of white spots on trunk becoming light bars posteriorly. Dorsal and anal fins with a white margin, anal margin wider. Dark brown stripe extends from eyes to tip of snout and tip of

chin along the belly back to anus, beyond which it bifurcates into two bars on both sides of anal base where it fades posteriorly. Gill opening with black spot.

Remarks : Smith (1962) indicated that this eel is quite a rare one in the Western Indian Ocean. The authors encountered only two specimens over ten years of collection. Smith also mentioned that *Gymnothorax goldsbroughi* Jordan & Evermann, 1903, from Hawaii, is very similar to *L. elegans* from Mozambique, but it differs in lacking midventral stripe along the belly. The stripe in the Red Sea specimens is conspicuous.

Distribution : until now, only recorded from Mauritius and Mozambique (Inhaca Island).

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